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# Administration's Threats Muzzled Somoza

By REED IRVINE

In his first press interview since going into exile in Paraguay, former President Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua charged that he had resigned because "the U.S. put a gun at my head, and I had no other choice."

Somoza explained:

"They told me that there would be no more arms, no more ammunition and there would be no more supplies—not from any source in the world. Actually, the U.S. placed a blockade on all of Nicaragua, while giving the Communists free shipment of men, arms and ammunition. If I stayed, there would be more bloodshed, and it became abundantly clear that with the U.S. on the other side, my troops, my people, and I were in a no-win situation. Therefore, I had no other choice. I had to leave."

Since the successors to Somoza are predominantly Marxists who are in the process of fastening a Castro-type regime on Nicaragua, the question naturally arises as to why our government did this. A leaked secret CIA memo dated May 2, 1979, had made it clear that Fidel Castro was backing the anti-Somoza rebels with arms, trained men, and tactical and strategic advice. Our White House and State Department officials therefore were well aware of the coloration of the regime that was the only alternative to Somoza.

Somoza told Jack Cox, whose ex-

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clusive interview with him appeared in the *Houston Chronicle* on October 14, that he had asked U.S. officials who were pressuring him to resign to find a responsible non-Marxist leader in the opposition camp who could handle the presidency of Nicaragua. He said the U.S. had not been able to find anyone. Somoza said: "Never in my wildest dreams did I think the U.S. would be part of a plot to place their strongest ally and supporter in the hands of the Communists." He contends that this is just what happened.

Asked to identify those in the U.S. government who were, in his opinion, mainly responsible for this, Somoza said: "I am happy to give you the names of those who contributed most to the Communist success in Nicaragua." He named four advisers to President Carter and Secretary of State Vance. They were Robert Pastor, a member of the staff of the National Security Council, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Patricia Derian, and Mark Schneider, an aide to Miss Derian and former member of the staff of Sen. Edward Kennedy.

Somoza expressed the view that these individuals were leftists. He said Miss Derian was "so far out in left field she is in the grandstands." Clearly it was his opinion that those who were guiding U.S. policy in forcing his ouster and replacement by a regime dominated by Communists were not misinformed about the nature of the successor regime, but were, rather, well aware of what they were doing.

Somoza said that he had remained in Miami only a few days after fleeing from Nicaragua because of threats that Deputy Secretary of State Christopher and our Ambassador to Nicaragua, Lawrence Pezzullo, made to him. Deputy Secretary Christopher had warned him in no uncertain terms that he would have to get his successor to

turn Nicaragua over to the Marxist-led rebels if he wanted to remain in the U.S.

Somoza said that he realized that he was not safe in this country after Ambassador Pezzullo called him to warn him against talking to Ronald Reagan, the leading Republican contender for the presidential nomination. He said that he has a tape of Pezzullo saying, "If you get together with Reagan, we will extradite you." Somoza said that would mean signing his own death warrant. He told Cox, "Those s.o.b.'s could, at their discretion, handcuff me, put me on an airplane and send me back to Nicaragua to face a Communist firing squad."

These charges and some very strong criticisms of President Carter were featured in Jack Cox's front-page story in the *Houston Chronicle* on October 14. The AP put the story on its wire. In Washington, where history is made but not always reported, the papers told their readers nothing about Somoza's stinging charges.